UNITED
NATIONS

DP

Governing Council
of the
United Nations
Development Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1993/SR.24
22 September 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GOVERNING COUNCIL

Fortieth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 11 June 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

CONTENTS

Programme planning and implementation

(d) National capacity-building

(h) Issues relating to programme quality, impact, sustainability, efficiency and programme/project audits

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Office of Conference Services, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION (DP/1993/66)

(d) NATIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING (DP/1993/23)

1. Mr. EDGREN (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation), introducing the report of the Administrator on national capacity-building (DP/1993/23), said that it offered a clear and comprehensive definition of the term "capacity-building", indicated the elements of a coherent strategy for national capacity-building, and identified the key areas in which UNDP focused its support for national capacity-building.

2. Capacity-building was a broad concept which went beyond institution-building and included the policy framework within which organizations functioned. The three elements in the definition of capacity-building were human resource development, the use of trained people in public and private sector organizations, and the rules, norms and expectations governing relations among people and organizations. In order to ensure the most effective use of technical cooperation resources in support of capacity-building it was important to address such questions as the relevance of activities to core national development priorities, the extent to which capacity-building contributed to the emergence of pluralism, whether the capacities that were being developed were sustainable in economic, financial and environmental terms, and whether there was an effective mechanism for coordinating external assistance and integrating it with national capacity-building efforts.

3. The framework for national capacity-building was provided by national systems of planning and management. The key capacities needed for economic and social development were: the capacity to define and manage the long term, including the participation of diverse social forces in the process; the capacity to formulate development policies and programmes; and the capacity to implement, monitor and evaluate development policies and programmes. The building blocks of UNDP support for those key capacities included the programme approach, national execution, and the aid coordination process. The successor arrangements for agency support costs would also facilitate the involvement of United Nations agencies in the development of sectoral policy and programme frameworks.

4. In formulating UNDP programme support, a key task was the assessment of existing national capacities and the identification of specific capacity-building targets. The support of UNDP for national capacity-building would focus increasingly on the upstream level of programme formulation and implementation. The programme approach to capacity-building would ensure that the programme support of UNDP was consistent with the objectives of national programmes.

5. Ms. COLEMAN-ADEBAYO (United States of America) said that the report of the Administrator (DP/1993/23) outlined an ambitious strategy to assist developing countries in achieving self-sufficiency in the management of their environment and natural resources. The United States Government viewed the Earth Summit as an extraordinary opportunity to expand its perspectives on global issues and to

(Ms. Coleman-Adebayo, United States)

strengthen its cooperation with multilateral and bilateral institutions. Indeed, its participation in the Capacity 21 project was an extension of its ongoing commitment to the process begun at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

6. The report had taken into account most of the major concerns raised by her delegation. Those concerns included the internal capacity of UNDP to meet its growing environmental programme commitments, the need to delineate the goals and scope of the project, the involvement of women in the Capacity 21 project, the participation of NGOs and indigenous communities, project implementation schedules, and coordination with other specialized agencies.

7. Unfortunately, however, it contained no reference to the Capacity 21 advisory board, which had been proposed in both the initial Capacity 21 document and the annual report of the Administrator. The advisory board, composed of representatives of both donor and recipient Governments, NGOs, academia and other concerned parties would serve as a vehicle for formalizing the involvement of all participating groups in the ongoing dialogue on the development of the Capacity 21 project. Her delegation urged UNDP to reinstate that component of the project.

8. While the report provided a clear set of criteria for selecting programme areas, it had failed to define environmental parameters for determining which environmental risk factors would be addressed in the targeted country. Decision-making concerning environmental problems involved a wide range of inputs, of which one of the most important was comparative quantitative risk assessment. While it was often possible to estimate the risk to individuals and populations posed by different environmental factors, comparison of those estimates was involved and complex. Without such estimates, however, comparison between different environmental problems was very difficult and was based, at best, on value judgements or expediency. Efforts should therefore be made to estimate the relative risk for populations exposed to different environmental hazards. Comparative risk assessment could be an invaluable tool for prioritizing in-country environmental agendas.

9. Her delegation would also welcome information on the plans to revise the handbook and guidelines for environmental management and sustainable development, in the light of the country-level training and evaluation which UNDP had conducted over the previous two years.

10. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) observed that, while the report of the Administrator (DP/1993/23) had presented capacity-building in a way that provided food for thought, the concept remained somewhat academic. He was confident, however, that it would be further elucidated in other forums. UNDP had a central role to play in capacity-building in developing countries; unfortunately, however, the report did not place sufficient emphasis on the political realities within which UNDP must operate.

11. Capacity-building, an area in which UNDP enjoyed certain comparative advantages over other agencies of the United Nations system, was no easy task

(Mr. Rohner, Switzerland)

and involved certain risks. It was especially difficult to determine strategies for national development, since a multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach was needed. UNDP must therefore adopt a more modest step-by-step approach

towards the achievement of its long-term objectives. He would welcome further information on the concrete experiences of UNDP in the area of the elaboration of country strategies for capacity-building. It would be particularly useful to have and early evaluation by UNDP of its activities undertaken within the framework of the African Capacity-building Initiative. UNDP should, in general, take advantage of the instruments at its disposal, such as national technical cooperation assessment and programmes (NATCAPs), country programme reviews, and the Management Development Programme (MDP) to take stock of its experiences in capacity-building.

12. Ms. SUOMALAINEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that national capacity-building was one of the key elements of the work of UNDP. It was both the key to sustainable development and the rationale for technical assistance.

13. In addressing the subject of people's participation, the Human Development Report 1993 took up an issue which was linked to national capacity-building. The issue of empowerment should be considered in light of the definition contained in the report of the Administrator (DP/1993/23) of the three components of capacity for development, i.e. education and training of managers, use of trained people in public and private organizations and development culture. The report identified two levels of decision-making: the national level and the individual/community level. For a cross-sectoral development organization like UNDP, that had implications both for the activities themselves and for the management of those activities.

14. While noting with satisfaction that the issues of capacity-building and the impact of capacity-building efforts were to be the subject of further study, in cooperation with the World Bank, capacity-building work in the field went on. The policy dialogue with the recipient Governments should be continued and strengthened, moulded and changed according to the results and experiences gained.

15. Mrs. CORVALAN (Observer for Chile) said that Chile valued its programme of cooperation with UNDP in areas which had been selected by the country and which were consistent with Chile's national development strategy. Chile was a developing country with a modern society and, at the same time, significant levels of poverty in certain sectors. It therefore welcomed the assistance of UNDP in achieving its goals of development with equity. UNDP support would be particularly welcome in national capacity-building aimed at the development of human resources and the strengthening of institutions and decision-making machinery.

16. The country had recently entered a new phase of democracy and had launched a programme of decentralization by which it sought to increase popular participation in its development process. UNDP could play a significant role in that decentralization process. Her delegation was therefore concerned at the decline in the level of resources allocated to Chile during the current

(Mrs. Corvalan, Observer, Chile)

programming cycle and hoped that those resources would be increased in the following programming cycle in order to help the country achieve its goals of decentralization and democracy.

17. The Government of Chile was prepared to work with its foreign partners, including UNDP; those foreign partners would receive the collaboration of a broad range of local sectors, including community groups, academic circles, the productive sector and non-governmental organizations. Her delegation hoped that that process of cooperation would build on existing national capacities in Chile in furtherance of the long-term objective of sustainable development.

18. Mr. ELLIS (United Kingdom) said that capacity-building was at the core of the activities of UNDP. The issues raised in the report of the Administrator (DP/1993/23) should therefore be discussed more fully in both formal and informal meetings. To attempt to address the shortcomings recognized in the report by widening the scope of capacity-building would create other, more complex problems. It was difficult to imagine, for example, how UNDP could resolve such complex problems as the emigration of skills from developing countries. It would first have to determine whether to opt for public sector reform or whether it should spread the risks so that capacity did not depend on only a small number of people. Even so, however, the problem of the open international labour market would remain.

19. He noted with satisfaction the emphasis placed by UNDP on upstream activities. For that approach to be successful, however, the strategies developed by UNDP should take into account the history of development in the recipient country over several cycles.

20. Mr. ACHA (Peru) said that Peru was creating the framework for national capacity-building, particularly in the field of the environment and sustainable development. It was in the process of establishing a national environmental agency which would seek to promote the objectives of Agenda 21. The agency would provide for participation by all social forces, especially non-governmental organizations, which were well represented in Peru and had participated in the preparation of its national programme under Agenda 21. He would welcome more information on the specific modalities of UNDP technical assistance for the implementation of Peru's national strategy in the field of the environment and sustainable development.

21. Mr. SHARMA (India) said that the greatest challenge his country faced in its national capacity-building programmes was the tendency of specialists to emigrate once they had received their training. While initiatives such as the Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programme had been useful, a more comprehensive effort was required.

22. Ms. VOLKOFF (Canada) said that she viewed capacity-building for sustainable development as a dynamic, particpatory process having a particular political, social and economic context in each country; therefore, assessments of the performance of individual capacity-building programmes would require flexible evaluation criteria.

(Ms. Volkoff, Canada)

23. Her delegation believed that there were a number of respects in which the execution of existing capacity-building programmes had departed from the conceptual ideal. First, to date, UNDP programming for national capacity-building had focused on support for governments to the exclusion of non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society. Second, while aid coordination was an essential component of national capacity-building, resource flows for technical cooperation were still being allocated in discrete packages for individual projects or through other piecemeal arrangements. Third, capacity-building required the acquisition by people of skills and participation in an organization committed to development goals; in reality, however, people were leaving development organizations after having acquired those skills. Lastly, national capacity-building was a long-term process involving policy discussions, consultations, analysis, monitoring and feedback. In practice, however, unforeseen events such as changes of personnel were creating uncertainty that frustrated efforts at long-term planning. Her delegation had been reassured to read in paragraph 39 of the Administrator's report (DP/1993/23) that a country strategy document had been designed to address some of those problems.

24. In her view, explicit country strategies and UNDP support for sustainable human development were the foundation upon which national capacity-building rested. UNDP was ideally placed to extend such support, especially in the areas of modern information management systems. In addition, UNDP could provide benchmarks for quantitative and qualitative evaluation of programme performance. She hoped that UNDP would adopt the evaluation benchmarks established by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

25. Mr. HORIGUCHI (Japan) said that there was a need for a more coherent national capacity-building strategy at UNDP and elsewhere in the development community. Japan was contributing large amounts of resources to the training of people who, upon their return to their home countries, were being denied access to positions that would permit them to apply their knowledge and skills in an effective manner. UNDP needed to address that problem in its own capacity-building.

26. Mr. BLANK (Germany) agreed that national capacity-building encompassed more aspects than those covered by existing programmes, and said that participation by grass-roots organizations and informal groups was an essential component of an effective national capacity-building effort. He agreed with the definition of capacity-building that Canada had presented and noted that that definition presupposed a degree of patience on the part of participants at the national and international levels. He believed that UNDP should incorporate criteria for the evaluation of performance with respect to Capacity 21 into the mid-term reviews of national country programmes.

27. Mr. EDGREN (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation) responding to the statements of Japan, Switzerland and Germany regarding the need for more specific information on the performance of capacity-building programmes, acknowledged that the discussion in the Administrator's report had been somewhat abstract. He would transmit information regarding specific programmes when it became available.

(Mr. Edgren)

28. In respect of Switzerland's concern regarding the political implications of capacity-building programming on the national level, he was aware of the problem; deficiencies in that regard could be corrected during the mid-term review process by evaluating objectively the specific environmental constraints on a programme as well as its overall social impact. He would be able to provide specific examples of such evaluations the following year. With respect to Switzerland's question concerning national capacity-building programmes in Africa, he said that the programmes in question would be evaluated during the normal course of the mid-term review process.

29. He agreed with India regarding the need for a more comprehensive approach to the problem of remaining trained indigenous personnel. While the TOKTEN programme had been a step in the right direction more could be done in that regard.

30. Regarding the question of DAC benchmarks for capacity-building, he said that UNDP had been participating in the process of developing those benchmarks; however, a clear scale for measuring performance in capacity-building across countries had not been devised because, as Canada had pointed out, capacity-building was so greatly influenced by the national context. He would undertake to provide specific examples of the use of Canada's definition in the execution of national capacity-building programmes at subsequent meetings of the Council.

31. The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council wished to take note of document DP/1993/23 containing the report of the Administrator.

32. It was so decided.

(h) ISSUES RELATING TO PROGRAMME QUALITY, IMPACT, SUSTAINABILITY, EFFICIENCY AND PROGRAMME/PROJECT AUDITS (DP/1993/27 AND DP/1993/28)

33. Mr. EDGREN (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation), introducing the report of the Administrator on efficiency of programming and the comparative advantages of UNDP (DP/1993/28), said that the comparative advantages of UNDP were based on international agreements and mandates and the resources available for administration and for technical cooperation. The four characteristics of UNDP technical cooperation were: impartiality; universality; multi-sectoral scope; and the global network of field offices. Those characteristics, if used to develop a supply of products, services and relationships which met priority national needs in the most cost-effective manner, could be the basis for comparative advantage.

34. The comparative advantages of UNDP could be divided into two categories - functional and substantive. Functional comparative advantages referred to the mechanisms of designing and delivering technical cooperation, the relationship of UNDP with Governments, United Nations specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and research institutions and were listed in paragraph 25 (a). The substantive comparative advantages of UNDP were potential rather than actual; they were referred to in paragraph 25 (b).

(Mr. Edgren)

35. Making the most of UNDP's comparative advantages would require better use of the field office network, more effective use of expertise elsewhere in the United Nations system, and closer contacts with research institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It would also be necessary to refine the relationships between UNDP and other agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions. Furthermore, the Programme should ensure complementarity of effort among cooperating agencies and assist national authorities in identifying national technical cooperation needs and priorities.

36. To date, costs and prices in the market for technical cooperation were exerting only limited influence upon the demand-supply relationship in the market for technical services. UNDP would support measures to induce the market to function more efficiently in order to make it easier for national authorities to make rational choices. A more efficient market and a degree of competition would make it possible for the agencies involved in the supply of technical cooperation services to produce according to their comparative advantages.

37. Mr. LUNDBORG (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that in view of the severe financial constraints facing UNDP and other agencies, there was a need for more clearly defined roles for each agency and a more targeted approach to development aid. UNDP should play a central role in the development activities of the United Nations system and, in order for it to do so, its governing and financial structure must be reformed. The Nordic countries were therefore deeply concerned to hear that the informal working group established by the General Assembly on principles for governance and financing of United Nations development activities had not yet reached a consensus.

38. Commenting on the report of the Administrator (DP/1993/28), and starting with the substantive comparative advantages of UNDP, he said that the studies commissioned by the Nordic countries within the framework of the Nordic United Nations project had showed that, due to the fragmented and marginal nature of its development assistance activities, the United Nations system had not played a sufficiently decisive role in the development of individual developing countries. UNDP's activities needed to be more focused. Since one of the Programme's main task was, and would continue to be, to enhance national capacities in developing countries, it would be necessary to improve its technical support efforts. That would require a significant increase in evaluation activities. One potential comparative advantage of UNDP was that its activities were cross-sectoral, allowing it to take a holistic approach to development issues. Another advantage stemmed from its analytical tasks. Through its Human Development Report UNDP had acquired an advocacy role and its development activities should be guided increasingly by the report. The Programme's increasingly vital role in emergency situations needed to be defined and strengthened. Although UNDP could play different roles in different countries, its goal should always be to improve the capacity of recipient countries to take full responsibility for their own development.

39. Concerning functional advantages, the Programme's global network of offices gave it a special position in the United Nations system and any discussions about its future role should also examine financing of and responsibility for those offices. Another crucial task was to achieve a clearer definition of the Programme's coordinating role in order to reduce the duplication and

(Mr. Lundborg, Sweden)

fragmentation which characterized United Nations development assistance activities.

40. While there was a need to constantly improve the Programme's recruitment policy through the hiring of personnel with substantial competence in the area of development assistance, training should also be emphasized as an important tool for further enhancing its efficiency.

41. Mr. MORALES-CARBALLO (Cuba) said that UNDP must continue to promote the economic and social development of all developing countries. UNDP's success was due in large measure to the fact that it was based on the principles of universality, neutrality and voluntarism and also to the insistence of recipient countries that they receive quality services and products. Cost and quality were inseparable and Governments must insist on both aspects.

42. He agreed that the comparative advantage of UNDP stemmed from a variety of things. While major multisectoral or multidisciplinary areas needed to be identified it was necessary to preserve a certain degree of flexibility in order to be able to take into account the situation of individual countries.

43. He further agreed that there were many potential comparative advantages. For example, the work of field offices could be improved to the greater benefit of recipient countries. Coordination could also be increased with other international organizations thus avoiding any duplication of effort.

44. National execution and the improvement of national capacity would have a decisive impact on the style of work done and on existing machinery. It would be up to the beneficiary countries to properly manage the sources of expert assistance for example. National execution would lead to a holistic way of looking at how UNDP could become even more effective.

45. Mr. NIE Hauliang (China) said that in response to changes in the international arena, UNDP had in recent years proposed a series of reforms. While a measure of innovation and reform was necessary, reforms should be carefully carried out and should be accompanied by safeguard measures. UNDP should set up guidelines for the timely implementation of those proposals in order to avoid any negative impact on its regular programme of operations.

46. There had been difficulties in reaching agreement with regard to the programme approach. Difficulties between headquarters and the field had delayed the execution of programmes. The work of UNDP should further emphasize macromanagement; excessive micromanagement had affected the efficiency of UNDP, which was not only lower than that of other international organizations but had also damaged the Programme's reputation. Some programmes took two years to prepare and preparation costs had amounted to 6 to 7 per cent of total input costs. In order to improve its efficiency, UNDP should further simplify the programme approval process and its field representatives should be given greater authority in approving projects. Experts should be selected on the basis of actual competence.

47. Mr. BLANK (Germany) said that the substantive comparative advantages listed in paragraph 25 (b) of document DP/1993/28 were crucial to the Programme's future. However, social development, poverty alleviation and community participation in development should be given top priority followed in that order by environmental protection and sustainable natural resources management; economic management and public sector reform; and productive capacity, involving technology transfer and support for the development of the private sector. UNDP must demonstrate its strength on the market. Functional comparative advantages were also very important but as competition was even stiffer in that area from other specialized agencies, UNDP had to prove its special competence and comparative efficiency. The contribution of UNDP to boosting the competence and responsibility of participant countries was also another key issue. All efforts should be geared to making UNDP a "world class repository of development experience".

48. UNDP now had the opportunity to enhance its performance as much as possible in order to enable all its partners to lend it their financial and intellectual support for the benefit of recipient countries. All United Nations bodies should be aware that the future of the operational system was extremely relevant to the world as a whole.

49. Ms. VOLKOFF (Canada) said that the question of comparative advantage was critical for UNDP. In order to get a competitive edge in the market, resources were required to develop competitiveness. She wondered whether, given the decrease in its resources UNDP could actually afford to invest such resources in developing that competitive edge or whether a decision must be made in advance as to which agencies were best suited to particular roles so that donor agencies and Governments could complement each other and avoid duplication or overlap. The comparative advantage of UNDP did not lie in the quantity of resources it brought to development. Generally speaking, the outline of functional comparative advantages presented in paragraph 25 (a) of the report was sound. With respect to substantive comparative advantages, she accepted the first three multisectoral areas listed in paragraph 25 (b) and agreed with the representative of Germany that they should be in a different order. However, concerning the fourth area, she pointed out that many bilateral donors were already trying to link private sector with private sector, adding that it was unclear whether UNDP could be more efficient than the donors.

50. Mr. ELLIS (United Kingdom), referring to the report on the efficiency of programming and the comparative advantages of UNDP (DP/1993/28), cautioned against taking an overly technical approach to the term "comparative advantage". The Programme should build principally on its experience and expertise acquired over the years in certain areas of technical cooperation and should not go into new areas requiring a build-up of expertise, particularly those that were already covered adequately by other aid organizations.

51. Complementarity should not be taken to extremes. His delegation did not feel that UNDP should, as a matter of priority, invest time in trying to make the market for technical cooperation services function better, which was not a necessary task of the Programme and perhaps not a practical or desirable goal. The substantive comparative advantages referred to in the report seemed to result from a bottom-up process based on the demands and requests of recipient

(Mr. Ellis, United Kingdom)

countries through the country programming exercise. The four multisectoral areas identified through the fifth-cycle country-programme process did not entirely correspond with the six priority areas set forth in Governing Council decision 90/34. He wished to know how and on what basis those areas had been identified.

52. The report on the harmonization of programme cycles and programming procedures (DP/1993/27) showed that the United Nations system must be flexible in order to respond to the preferences of developing countries. He felt that the Programme could do more in that area and should, perhaps, move away from a fixed five-year cycle, if that was the wish of recipient countries. Lastly, with regard to the simplification and harmonization of financial and reporting procedures, his delegation supported the idea of waiting for the recommendations to be submitted by the working group dealing with that question. Nevertheless, in view of the deadline imposed in General Assembly resolution 47/199 for reaching agreement on a manual, action must be taken very speedily once the recommendations were submitted.

53. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) stressed the need to develop a clear profile for UNDP. Instead of talking about comparative advantages, he preferred to identify the specific strengths of UNDP. Studies conducted in the past had demonstrated that there was a tendency to carry out scattered activities and ad hoc projects in a number of different sectors. In his view, the Programme's main characteristics were its multilateral approach and its general impartiality. UNDP should work in areas where that impartiality would be of particular importance, such as policy formulation. The Programme should do more work on the upstream side together with other organizations that could provide assistance in various fields.

54. It was absolutely crucial that the Programme's profile should be developed at the country level in conjunction with Governments. There should be a real dialogue between UNDP, the Government concerned and cooperation partners on the Programme's role and how to make best use of its resources in a given country. That should be the basis for the country programme, which was the point of reference for identifying the comparative advantages of UNDP. Through the country programme, UNDP and the recipient country demonstrated to the donors and cooperation partners the specific areas where best use could be made of the Programme's experience and know-how.

55. Mrs. CORVALAN (Observer for Chile) said that her country was engaged in a discussion involving public ministries in the field of multilateral cooperation and the representatives of private and public organizations active in national development in order to determine policy in the field of strategic planning. Chile was interested in availing itself of the opportunities provided by UNDP to make better use of innovative modalities and models of international cooperation that were most appropriate for its development needs.

56. Mr. EDGREN (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation), responding to questions raised by delegations, said that the time had long since passed when the Programme was regarded as a donor of last resort which would fill gaps wherever they occurred. That was clear from

(Mr. Edgren)

the country programmes. The four areas referred to in the report under substantive comparative advantages were problem areas on which country programmes were focusing. Through the process of country-led programming exercises, the fifth cycle programme was much more focused than ever before.

57. The four areas tallied very well with the six priority areas identified in Governing Council decision 90/34. There was no intention of making UNDP into a specialized agency. The four areas were not sectors but rather types of problems on which attention should be focused in providing assistance. He agreed that in-house expertise often constituted the greatest obstacle to innovation. That was a general problem affecting a number of international aid organizations. Nevertheless, if the management of an organization was strong enough and had the necessary vision it was possible to design innovative programmes. It was his hope that UNDP would be able to do just that to respond to the new challenges facing it.

58. It was necessary to have sufficient expertise to find those who could provide inputs into development programmes. UNDP must be able to find top-notch experts and people with a broader knowledge of areas for providing assistance in order to satisfy the needs of recipient countries. The Programme was trying to enhance the capability of field offices to respond to some of those requirements since they handled much of the technical work involved. Decentralization of project work would be carried out by strengthening the technical capacity of field offices not only through in-house expertise but also by attracting people from the recipient country and the region to work in field offices and provide advice with regard to project design and monitoring.

59. The Programme could not afford not to develop comparative advantages in specific areas. In doing so, it should avoid spreading itself too thin and it must develop substantive expertise. Otherwise it would lose funding and its partners in developing countries would turn to other organizations. UNDP should try to make the market for technical cooperation services function better by bringing about greater transparency and providing developing countries with a better overview of what was being offered and the costs of the various services and products involved. In conjunction with the World Bank, UNDP would organize a seminar on that question in January 1994 in order to determine what could be done to make the market more transparent and provide better help to developing countries.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.